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Equality, Trust, and Tolerance*

How Sense of Equality Affects Social Tolerance in Romania

DRAGOȘ DRAGOMAN

Social trust is one of the most disputed topics discussed in recent years in social sciences. Its importance results from the functions many scholars suppose trust may support. Trust may be related to some very desirable values: inherent values (happiness, optimism for the future), but also political values (public support for working democratic institutions, minorities' rights and social tolerance, higher political participation), and economic values (a positive relationship between personal income and economic growth at an aggregate level)¹. Whereas trust may facilitate communication, it may make easier to attain common goals, and may be essential in all collective action. Moreover, trust is also critical to democracy. It links ordinary citizens to the institutions that are intended to represent them, thereby enhancing both the legitimacy and the effectiveness of democratic government².

Fukuyama defines trust as "the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest and cooperative behavior, based on commonly shared norms, on the part of other members of that community. Those norms can be about deep *value* questions like the nature of God or justice, but they also encompass secular norms like professional standards and codes of behavior"³. According to Mark Freitag,

"Trust furthers norms, which abdicate egocentric calculations and self-interest. Moreover, it strengthens the willingness of individuals to act in the interests of the group or community to overcome social dilemmas [...] it stimulates a type of generalized reciprocity where altruistic behavior and obligations will be repaid at some unspecified time, at some unspecified location, by an unspecified person. Generalized attitudes of trust extend beyond the boundaries of face-to-face interaction and incorporate people who are not personally known. These attitudes go beyond the boundaries of kinship and friendship and the boundaries of acquaintance"⁴.

* I want to thank Adrian Moraru for the access to the data from the survey on "Intolerance, Discrimination, and Authoritarianism in the Public Opinion" (Institute for Public Policy Romania).

¹ Bo ROTHSTEIN, Eric M. USLANER, "All for All: Equality and Social Trust", paper to be presented at the European Consortium for Political Research Joint Session of Workshops, Granada, Spain, 2005, Workshop 6: Equality of Opportunity, p. 3.

² William MISHLER, Richard ROSE, "What Are the Origins of Political Trust: Testing Institutional and Cultural Theories in Post-Communist Societies", *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 34, no. 1, 2001, p. 30.

³ Francis FUKUYAMA, *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*, New York, Free Press, 1995, p. 26.

⁴ Markus FREITAG, "Social Capital in (Dis)similar Democracies. The Development of Generalized Trust in Japan and Switzerland", *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 36, no. 8, 2003, p. 944.

Consequently, cooperation may be undermined by any inherent lack of trust. Whereas trust could be seen as the basis of all solidarity, defined as the belief that all social groups share a common fate, and that is the responsibility of those having more resources to help those having fewer resources, trust may be weakened by sticky social characteristics, as social inequality.

We are here interested in the relationship between inequality and trust, and by the consequences of this relationship. First, it has been stated that perennial or even growing inequality erodes the basis of trust in post-communist societies. There are findings that strongly support this claim. Gabriel Bădescu finds a quite strong relationship between the growing income inequality – measured as the difference between Gini indices from the '80s and from the '90s – and social trust – as measured by the European Values Survey¹ in 1999 – for 14 post-communist states².

Second, the low level of social trust is accompanied by the wide spread belief that state institutions are largely incapable to fight corruption in these countries. Rose and Mishler find a strong effect of aggregate corruption on social trust. "The more corrupt a country's current institutions are, the more citizens in those countries are likely to distrust other people"³. But corruption also affects trust in public institutions. Using the Transparency International Index of corruption, the authors show how countries with higher aggregate corruption levels suffer the lowest levels of aggregate trust in institutions. Additionally, low levels of trust in public institutions may undermine a much required support for these very institutions, which are supposed to promote social policies in order to reduce inequality:

"Persistent petty corruption may make *gift payments* appear to be rational responses to an unresponsive service sector: You may feel more secure in knowing that you can buy your children's way into a good school and to good grades, rather than risking more neutral assignment and grading criteria. You may well prefer to make an extra payment at a doctor's office rather than wait your turn. Corruption feeds upon economic inequality, low trust, and poor government performance. But it generates alternative ways of coping that may inhibit the adoption of programs that might alleviate inequality"⁴.

Whereas trust is essential for the support for public policies, trust also strengthens the belief that other members in society do not cheat the system, thereby consolidating solidarity. In societies affected by mistrust and inequality, social groups view one another as enemies. The poor consider that those who made fortunes during the transition time employed illegal means, especially corruption, while the rich oppose supporting larger burdens favoring the poor, which they classify as "social parasites". This phenomenon is clearly revealed by redistribution claims in Romania. The conclusion for the Romanian survey⁵ is that:

"[the] results suggest that people are aware of the high level of inequality and would like to live in a less stratified society, but with one important

¹ See for instance Ton VAN SCHAIK, "Social Capital in the European Values Study Surveys", country paper prepared for the OECD-ONS International Conference on Social Capital Measurement, London, 2002.

² Gabriel BĂDESCU, "Încredere și democrație în țările în tranziție", *Sociologie Românească*, nr. 1-2, 2003, p. 116.

³ William MISHLER, Richard ROSE, "What Are the Origins of Political Trust:...cit.", p. 53.

⁴ Bo ROTHSTEIN, Eric M. USLANER, "All for All:...cit.", p. 25.

⁵ See all the results of Romanian Public Opinion Barometers at www.osf.ro/bop.html.

qualification: homogenization should affect mainly the richest people, and in the same time, the mechanisms for differentiation based on merit should be preserved or enhanced"¹.

The perennial inequality and distrust may generate a vicious cycle, what is known as a "social trap":

"Poor and inegalitarian countries thus find themselves entrapped into continuing inequality, mistrust and *dysfunctional institutions*. High levels of inequality contribute to lower levels of trust, which lessen the political and societal support for the state to collect resources for launching and implementing universal welfare programs in an uncorrupted and non-discriminatory way. Unequal societies find themselves trapped in a continuous cycle of inequality, low trust in others and in government, policies that do little to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor *and create a sense of equal opportunity*. Demands for radical redistribution, as we see in many of the transition countries, exacerbate social tensions rather than relieving them"².

An example of a properly working social system comes from Sweden³. Both political right and left criticize the encompassing social system for its supposed disastrous effect on natural solidarity in this Scandinavian country. According to Rothstein, the argument is that people stop caring when social problems and altruism are taken over by the government; compassion will be shown only through paying taxes and informal social networks will be weakened. In fact, the welfare state would undermine natural forms of solidarity, would undermine all intimate ties between citizens and, thus, would undermine even its own very moral basis. But there is hardly any empirical evidence to support such claims. Social capital has remained fairly stable over the last decades, and there is no evidence that the encompassing Swedish welfare state has undermined trust and social capital. One explanation seems to be in the way the welfare state system has been institutionalized, that is, the social policy based on the idea of "people's insurance" that supplies all citizens with basic resources. First of all, the universal nature of this insurance would prevent stigmatization of the poverty relief, so that people receiving support from the state social system cannot be seen as "the others", "the social parasites" or "the unworthy". Second, if one compares means-tested programs to universal programs, the latter are far less likely to create the suspicion that people are cheating the system⁴.

We believe that in transition countries inequality not only affects trust between fellow citizens and social solidarity, but also that inequality has effects on the way people accept social diversity and practice tolerance. It may be that social competition and lack of tolerance dispose people to trust their in-group and to distrust other groups. We have already looked at how social capital may be responsible for tolerance and cooperation in multicultural communities in Transylvania⁵,

¹ Gabriel BĂDESCU, "Culture, Income Tax and Social Inequality in Romania", *Romanian Journal of Society and Politics*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2004, p. 85.

² Bo ROTHSTEIN, Eric M. USLANER, "All for All:...cit.", pp. 24-25.

³ Bo ROTHSTEIN, "Social Capital in the Social Democratic Welfare State", *Politics & Society*, vol. 29, no. 2, 2001, pp. 207-241.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 234.

⁵ Dragoș DRAGOMAN, "Capital social și relații etnice. Toleranță, încredere și cooperare în comunități multietnice", in Gabriel BĂDESCU, Mircea KIVU, Monica ROBOTIN (edit.),

but we intend here to assess the importance of inequality for trust and social tolerance. The strong belief in perennial inequality in Romania may inhibit social trust, which may in turn promote ethnic and social intolerance. We thereby use a Romanian survey on "Intolerance, Discrimination, and Authoritarianism in the Public Opinion", conducted in 2003 by Gallup Romania on the request of the Institute for Public Policy Romania.

Inequality, Social Inequity, and Frustration

We may consider different types of inequality: economic inequality, income inequality, social inequality, but we emphasize here another type of inequality, inequality of opportunity. Whereas economic inequality may be produced by the capitalist economy, inequality of opportunity could be seen as an inequality affecting the citizens' social trust, as well as their trust in state institutions. There are two levels of this perceived inequality. First, there is the feeling that those who made a fortune during transition time, who managed to acquire an education or a power status – "the social winners" – became, in fact, more arrogant. All they need is a handful of money, a higher-education certificate or an average public function to start despising fellow citizens. Whereas the former socialist society was quite egalitarian, the current effort to become differentiated may cause distress. In fact, there is a strong belief in the arrogance one may display.

Table 1

The Belief in the Arrogance of the Transition's "Social Winners"

<i>Item</i>	<i>Agree (%)</i>
Generally speaking, people who acquire university education despise other people	57.3
Generally speaking, rich people despise other people	82.7
Generally speaking, people who acquire a bit of power start to despise other people	84.4

Second, there is an inequality in transition societies that may be seen as pure inequity. Dysfunctional laws and state institutions, widespread corruption, and impunity for many officeholders may nurture opinion that crimes remain largely unpunished and rules are systematically broken by those in power. They may also strengthen the belief that one can make a fortune only in such a way, by using perverted means such as corruption. Therefore all solidarity is useless, because it appears contrary to the "winning strategy" in society.

Barometrul Relațiilor Etnice 1994-2002. O perspectivă asupra climatului interetnic din România, Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Center, Cluj, 2005, pp. 139-154.

Table 2
The Belief in Social Inequity

<i>Item</i>	<i>Agree (%)</i>
Laws are useless, since those in power act as they wish	80.1
Nowadays, most of those who break the rules remain unpunished	75.9
Nowadays, even tribunals fail to do justice to ordinary people	69.0
The only way to make fortune in Romania is by illegal means	66.7
The only reason for parties is that politicians could make a career	68.5

This perceived inequity is largely favored by pervasive corruption. As stated above, only those people who make a fortune break the rules, in conjunction with people in power. This belief in widespread corruption and outrageous inequity erodes interpersonal as well as political trust:

"Trust is closely related to corruption. The level of corruption is most likely to affect the level of 'positive' trust. If somebody commits an illegal act against you, e.g. ignoring the formal rules of a contract, then the offender will be punished in a police and court system without corruption. It is not possible for the offender to use the gains from the crime and split it with the police and the judge. So, if both parties know that it does not pay to break the rules, they will adapt their behavior and, by repeated encounters, build up trust and trust [...] When citizens cannot trust institutions in society and when everyone is not equal to the law, this unpredictability blocks the building of trust"¹.

Whereas democracy badly needs legitimacy in order to gain respect for rules, the lack of trust in state institutions and social distrust stimulate dishonest behavior in public life. Corruption undermines economic growth, affects state legitimacy, social trust and solidarity, in a continuous vicious cycle that is very hard to break:

"We find that people who perceive increasing income inequality are less likely to approve of government performance and to trust other people and are more likely to support limits on incomes of the rich. More generally, when people see the government as corrupt and the country moving in the wrong direction, social solidarity (trust in other people) and confidence in the state will decline – and there will be increasing demands for curtailing market forces and placing limits on incomes. Most notably, people are largely inured to the petty corruption of everyday life; it is larger scale corruption – by business people and especially government officials – that threatens social solidarity and support for the state"².

¹ Gert TINGGAARD SVENDSEN, "Social Capital, Corruption and Economic Growth: Eastern and Western Europe", working paper 03-21, Departement of Economics, Aarhus School of Business, p. 8.

² Eric M. USLANER, Gabriel BĂDESCU, "Making the Grade in Transition: Equality, Tranparency, Trust, and Fairness", paper presented at the European Consortium for Political Research Joint Session of Workshops, Granada, Spain, 2005, p. 4.

Economists have already stressed that trust may affect economic growth¹. Trust, in turn, may be largely impossible in a society affected by poverty and savage competition. In fact, transitions to capitalism and economic transformations that have occurred in the region have provoked a fall in revenues and in the satisfaction with one's life. Furthermore, the persistent dysfunctional economy only produces people more pessimistic toward future amelioration.

Table 3

The Current Satisfaction with One's Life and the Expected Situation in Five Years Time

Item	Worse (%)
How your current life is when compared with that five years ago?	51.0
How do you think people in Romania live, compared with the situation existing five years ago?	67.7
How do you think you will live in five years time?	26.8
How do you think people in Romania live in five years time?	29.5

Dissatisfaction, pessimism regarding the future, combined with the strong belief in the existing inequalities and social inequities may cause deep frustration. In order to measure this phenomenon, we first build scales on each dimension we have previously indicated, that is, the perceived arrogance of the "social winners", social inequity and pessimism for the near future, by adding up composing items. We see how perceived arrogance and inequity, for example, are correlated ($r = .363$, $p < .01$, $N = 1500$). We then combine the three dimensions in a single social frustration index and look at how it may stimulate authoritarian attitudes and ethnic prejudices, affect trust, and ethnic and social tolerance.

Frustration and Authoritarianism

We begin with a discussion on authoritarian attitudes. Although we have already indicated the link between ethnic intolerance and authoritarianism in Transylvania², we here intend to focus on the relationship between social frustration and authoritarian attitudes. Dumitru Sandu demonstrates how status inconsistency, that is, differences between economic status and education status, strongly affect public action attitudes in Romania³. Thus negative inconsistency (lower

¹ Martin PALDAM, Gert TINGAART SVENDSEN, "Missing Social Capital and the Transition in Eastern Europe", *Journal for Institutional Innovation, Development and Transition*, no. 5, 2001, pp. 21-34.

² Dragoș DRAGOMAN, "La recomposition du champ politique régional en Roumanie. Le succès du Forum Allemand à Sibiu/Hermannstadt", *Studia Politica. Romanian Political Science Review*, vol. V, no. 1, 2005, p. 185.

³ Dumitru SANDU, "Status Inconsistency as Predictor of Public Action Attitudes in Romania", *Current Sociology*, vol. 52, no. 6, 2004, pp. 989-1020.

economic status than education status) probably correlates more with authoritarian attitudes¹. In Romania the poverty rate sharply increased from 1996 to 2000, reaching 30% in 2001². Consequently, there is a strong belief of downward mobility, large numbers of citizens considering that their current life is worse than before 1989. Since changes in educational status are slower than in economic status, we can expect an increase in authoritarian attitudes. We measure tendency towards authoritarian attitudes using a score of authoritarianism, computed on the basis of several items, as shown below. Unsurprisingly, the score turns out to be positively correlated with social frustration, though the correlation is weak ($r = .104$, $p < .01$, $N = 1470$).

Table 4
Authoritarian Attitudes

<i>Item</i>	<i>Agree (%)</i>
This is the man who always decides for his family	39.3
Sometimes children must be punished and beaten in order to learn how to conduct themselves well	19.1
Books and ideas that undermine state authority must be forbidden	35.5
The most important things children must learn are respecting and obeying authorities	53.7
Romania needs a strong leader, who imposes order	73.8

Social Trust and Institutional Trust in Romania

The first observation is that social trust in Central and Eastern Europe is weaker than in Western Europe. Whereas the mean for the Western European countries reaches 36%, the mean for the post-communist countries is only 20.6%³. This difference may be caused by what people currently understand by "most people can be trusted". Gabriel Bădescu states that a better way to operationalize trust would be confidence in other ethnicities⁴. Public Opinion Barometer surveys in Romania constantly use the same question, while registering sharp variations in the level of social trust⁵.

¹ *Ibidem*, p. 1007.

² *Ibidem*, p. 991.

³ Gabriel BĂDESCU, "Încredere și democrație...cit.", p. 113.

⁴ IDEM, "Social Trust and Democratization in the Post-Communist Societies", in Gabriel BĂDESCU, Eric USLANER (eds.), *Social Capital and the Transition to Democracy*, Routledge, New York, 2003.

⁵ The Public Opinion Barometer (POB) is financed by Open Society Foundation Romania. The complete data is available at <http://www.osf.ro/ro/bop/cercetare.html>.

Table 5
Most People Can Be Trusted

Survey		Institute	%
1998	June	CURS	12.4
	November	MMT	10.8
1999	May	MMT	37.5
	October	CURS	27.8
2000	May	MMT	29.2
	November	CURS	30.7
2001	May	MMT	31.3
	November	CURS	28.7
2002	June	IMAS	38.0
	October	MMT	32.5
2003	May	Gallup	34.1
	October	CURS	31.0
2004	May	Gallup	38.7
	October	Gallup	31.7
2005	May	Gallup	40.0

As stated above, trust may be related to many social, political and economic values. Recent research demonstrates how social trust endorses economic cooperation, reducing transactions' costs and inhibiting corruption, promoting economic growth¹. When it comes to political values, there are vast amounts of literature linking social capital to political interest, political competence and participation, to the ideal type of a "good citizen"². There are, however, many other values connected to social capital. Rothstein and Uslaner indicate satisfaction and optimism for the future as two important values³. Inspecting these variables in our research sample, we find how they are correlated to social trust. More people consider current individual and collective life worse than that experienced five years ago, and they trust other people less ($r = -.192$, $p < .01$, $N = 1380$). Moreover, the stronger their pessimism for individual and collective life in five years time, the less trusting are individuals in Romania ($r = -.101$, $p < .01$, $N = 1380$). As one can expect, dissatisfaction with current life is significantly correlated with pessimism ($r = .307$, $p < .01$, $N = 1500$).

Turning to institutional trust, we notice the same pattern for social trust, that is the lack of trust in state institutions all over Central and Eastern Europe⁴. But we

¹ Christian BJØRNSKOV, "Corruption and Social Capital – Is There a Causal Link?", paper presented at the European Public Choice Society meeting in Aarhus, Denmark, April 2003.

² William WALTERS, "Social Capital and Political Sociology: Re-imagining Politics?", *Sociology*, vol. 36, no. 2, 2002, pp. 377-397.

³ Bo ROTHSTEIN, Eric M. USLANER, "All for All:...cit.", p. 24.

⁴ Ioan MĂRGINEAN, Iuliana PRECUPETU, Marius PRECUPETU, "România în cadrul celui de-al treilea val al democratizării", *Sociologie Românească*, nr. 1-4, 2001, p. 26.

have to stress here that distrust in political institutions is a common feature in Western Europe as well¹. In Romania, the less trusted institutions are those that have been designed to represent people's interests, such as Parliament and political parties.

Table 6
Institutional Trust

<i>Item</i>	<i>Trust (%)</i>
Churches	77.3
Military	62.8
Mass-media	53.2
Municipality mayor	35.5
Police	34.3
Presidency	31.5
Romanian Secret Service	26.3
Government	22.8
Law courts	22.0
Banks	20.7
Parliament	15.8
Labor unions	13.6
Political parties	9.3

There is a strong debate regarding the relationship between the two types of trust, namely between social or interpersonal and political or institutional trust. According to Putnam, interpersonal trust helps make political institutions work because it "spills over," it "spills up" from individuals to institutions². But other scholars are skeptical about this relationship. Not only do the two dimensions not correlate strongly, but they are theoretically different³. Newton states that social and political trust tends to be expressed by different kinds of people for different reasons. Even if there is generally a positive association between social trust and political confidence, the relationship is not particularly tight or close. Mishler and Rose find no evidence supporting the theory claiming that there is a close connection between social and political trust⁴. From their evidence it is clear that interpersonal trust does not spill up to create institutional trust, and institutional trust does not trickle down. Interpersonal trust appears almost wholly exogenous to the political process. It is more an individual personality trait whose origins lie outside the scope of politics. By contrast, the authors stress that institutional trust is substantially affected by both political and economic performance while being almost

¹ Mattei DOGAN, "Deficit of Confidence within European Democracies", in M. HALLER (ed.), *The Making of the European Union*, Springer, Berlin, 2001, pp. 241-264. See also IDEM, "Trust-mistrust in European democracies", *Sociologie Românească*, nr. 1-4, 2001, pp. 1-20.

² Robert PUTNAM, "Turning In, Turning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America", *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 28, 1995, pp. 664-683.

³ Kenneth NEWTON, "Trust, Social Capital, Civil Society and Democracy", *International Political Science Review*, vol. 22, no. 2, 2001, p. 204.

⁴ William MISHLER, Richard ROSE, "What Are the Origins of Political Trust:...cit.", p. 55.

wholly unaffected by interpersonal trust or by socialization influences. There are, however, findings supporting the claim that social trust and political trust are connected. Among the decisive determinants of generalized trust in Japan and Switzerland, for example, the strongest effect relates to the influence of institutional confidence¹. Following a principal components analysis (not shown here), we decided to group confidence in Romanian Parliament, Government, Presidency, as well as in municipality mayors, police, law courts and political parties into a single dimension of institutional trust. Social trust appears connected to the institutional trust, but the correlation is rather weak ($r = .101$, $p < .01$, $N = 1380$).

What we look for is how social trust affects social tolerance in Romania. We have already found out how social trust is connected to the predisposition to engage oneself in daily contacts with people that are ethnically different². We add here the effects of social frustration on social and ethnic tolerance. Intolerance toward different people may be caused by social frustration which is a reaction to successive failures in social upward mobility. Frustration indeed negatively correlates with social trust ($r = -.125$, $p < .01$, $N = 1380$) and political confidence ($r = -.169$, $p < .01$, $N = 1380$). We explore below the connection between social frustration, on the one hand, and ethnic, religious and social toleration on the other hand. Because we intend to examine ethnic tolerance in Romania, we exclude from our sample all ethnic minorities and focus narrowly on ethnic Romanians ($N = 1384$).

Social Intolerance

Social intolerance can vary from the extreme intolerance, defined as the tendency to destroy people who are different from oneself, to the tendency to support people who conduct themselves in a different manner, in spite of all disagreement, which we term the highest tolerance, associated with generosity³. Between the two extremes, there is a range of possible attitudes. The most common is that based upon relativism, acknowledging that two people may have different faiths, but they are both entitled to have a faith. While tolerance is connected to specific attitudes toward social differences, we may examine tolerance's relationships with trust, since in modern societies, prejudices and discrimination are more and more disguised.

Social distance is measured here by the tendency to engage in various close relationships, such as with family members, friends, colleagues, neighbors, or fellow citizens that are different. The difference may be a religious one (as with Jehovah's Witnesses or with Muslims), it may concern a sexual orientation (as with gays and lesbians) or it may imply a different citizenship (as with citizens of Moldova). Using these specific social distances we compute a score of social intolerance, where high values indicate large social distances. The regression analysis demonstrates

¹ Markus FREITAG, "Social Capital in (Dis)similar Democracies...cit.", pp. 936-966.

² Dragoș DRAGOMAN, "Capital social și relații etnice. Toleranță, încredere și cooperare în comunități multietnice", in Gabriel BĂDESCU, Mircea KIVU, Monica ROBOTIN (ed.), *Barometrul Relațiilor Etnice 1994-2002...cit.*, pp. 139-154.

³ Dumitru SANDU, "Diferențieri europene ale toleranței sociale", *Sociologie Românească*, nr. 1-2, 2002, p. 2.

that social intolerance is explained less by trust and more by frustration and authoritarianism. Two variables that may inhibit social intolerance are education and the urban residence. Living in Transylvania also makes people less intolerant. One explanation may reside in the religious and ethnic heterogeneity of the province, as the frequent contacts between different people may stimulate tolerance.

Table 7
Ordinary Least Squares Estimates of Social Intolerance

Gender: masculine (1)	-.047	-.061*	-.058*	-0.050	-.069*
Age (continuous)	.006	.022	-.007	-0.002	-.001
Education (0-9)	-.134***	-.136***	-.118***	-0.120***	-.109**
Unemployed (1)	.006	---	0.007	-0.001	-.003
Personal income (continuous)	-.025	-.032	-.014	-0.022	-.019
Residence: town (1)	-.130***	-.139***	-.118***	-0.140***	-.133***
Region: Transylvania (1)	-.073**	-.083**	-.174**	-0.070*	-.083**
Social trust		-.028			-.019
Authoritarianism			.123***		.109***
Frustration				0.099***	.081**
Adjusted R square	.058	.067	.071	.067	.084

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; standardized coefficients *beta* shown only.

Ethnic and Religious Intolerance

There is in Romania a tendency to exclude people that are ethnically and religiously different from society. This intolerance may be expressed by the refusal to include these people in the (political) definition of the nation and the subsequent refusal of their rights. But there is another indicator of intolerance, the anxiety regarding the ethnic purity of the nation and the expressed consent to a hypothetical expelling of people that are different.

Table 8
Ethnic and Religious Intolerance

<i>Item</i>	<i>Agree (%)</i>
People that live in Romania and are not ethnically Romanians do not belong to the Romanian nation	23.9
People that live in Romania and do not belong to the Romanian Orthodox Church do not belong to the Romanian nation	6.3
Ethnic Romanians should not mix with other ethnicities	30.4
People that are not ethnically Romanians should leave Romania	14.5
Nowadays minorities in Romania benefit of too many rights	20.0

While almost one third of Romanians consider that Romanians should not mix with other ethnicities, a proportion as large as 14.5 % think that other ethnicities should leave the country. Besides the scale of these proportions, we find out that these two variables correlates ($r = .486, p < .01, N = 1235$). Tolerance toward other ethnicities is still a problem in Romania, and it may be fueled by the lasting confusion between the ethnic and the political definition of the nation¹. Monica Robotin explores the consequences of this confusion for the way ethnic Romanians generally consider Hungarians and Gypsies in Romania². Measuring the importance of a series of variables for intolerance we find out that social trust has no effect. Only authoritarianism and frustration, along with residence in towns and in Transylvania, appear as predictors of ethnic and religious intolerance.

Table 9

Ordinary Least Squares Estimates of Ethnic and Religious Intolerance

Gender: masculine (1)	-.039	-.041	-.054	-.043	-.052
Age (continuous)	-.006	.004	-.018	-.016	-.020
Education (0-9)	-.107**	-.096*	-.088**	-.086**	-.063
Unemployed (1)	.042	.040	.051	.034	.039
Personal income (continuous)	.010	-.028	.019	.014	-.016
Residence: town (1)	-.075*	-.082**	-.071*	-.088**	-.086**
Region: Transylvania (1)	-.089**	-.104***	-.091**	-.082**	-.102***
Social trust		.001			.019
Authoritarianism			.170***		.141***
Frustration				.152***	.136***
Adjusted R square	.028	.036	.060	.050	.078

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; standardized coefficients *beta* shown only.

Prejudices and Intolerance toward Ethnic Hungarians

Intolerance in Romania is not only toward other ethnicities and religions, considered as annoying differences, but toward specific ethnicities. As we will stress below, widespread prejudices strongly affect tolerance toward these ethnic minorities. Although we have already examined the intolerance against ethnic Hungari-

¹ Romanian Constitution in 1991 states that "Romania is a national state" – article 1; "National sovereignty belongs to the Romanian people" – article 2; "The unity of the Romanian people is the foundation of the state" – article 4. The confusion is due to the fact that in Romanian the term "people" has a primary ethnic meaning.

² Monica ROBOTIN, "Stat și identitate etnică în România. O incursiune în percepțiile majorității și minorităților asupra acestei relații", in Gabriel BĂDESCU, Mircea KIVU, Monica ROBOTIN (ed.), *Barometrul Relațiilor Etnice 1994-2002*. cit., pp. 15-40.

ans in Romania¹, we use an intolerance score in order to explore the relationships between frustration, social trust and tolerance. This specific score of intolerance against ethnic Hungarians is based on the following items.

Table 10
Intolerance toward Ethnic Hungarians

<i>Item</i>	<i>Agree (%)</i>
Hungarians in Romania should speak only Romanian when dealing with public administration, although in some regions they outnumber ethnic Romanians	71.3
It would be better that ethnic Hungarians go live in Hungary	26.0
<i>Item</i>	<i>Disagree (%)</i>
Romania must provide public education in Hungarian to ethnic Hungarian children	45.7
Romania must afford a greater autonomy to the counties where ethnic Hungarians constitute a majority	78.7

The current relationships between Hungarian and Romanian communities in Transylvania, between Hungarian and Romanian political parties, and between public authorities in Romania and in Hungary are dominated much more by cooperation and mutual respect than ten years ago. That period was dominated by a political and symbolic conflict, and the public discourse in Romania was filled with negative stereotypes regarding the Hungarian community in Transylvania and the Hungarian state. Though only a certain part of the stereotypes are negative², they have been largely used by Romanian parties in different contexts and have been considerably amplified³.

Table 11
Prejudices against Ethnic Hungarians

<i>Item</i>	<i>Agree (%)</i>
The ethnic Hungarians' interests diverge from those of other Romanian citizens	57.2
Although they can, many Hungarians refuse to speak Romanian	76.6
Hungarians never abandon all hope to attach Transylvania to the Hungarian state	57.0

¹ Dragoș DRAGOMAN, "La recomposition du champ politique régional en Roumanie...cit.", pp. 181-201.

² Raluca SOREANU, "Autodefinire și heterodefinire a românilor și maghiarilor din România. O analiză empirică a stereotipurilor etnice și a fundamentelor diferite de definire a identității etnice", in Gabriel BĂDESCU, Mircea KIVU, Monica ROBOTIN (ed.), *Barometrul Relațiilor Etnice 1994-2002...cit.*, pp. 65-88.

³ Gabriel ANDREESCU, *Ruleta. Români și maghiari: 1990-2000*, Polirom, Iași, 2001.

Intolerance toward ethnic Hungarians largely correlates with the prejudices against them ($r = .468$, $p < .01$, $N = 1384$), but it correlates also with frustration. As indicated in the regression analysis below, frustration is a predictor largely weaker than the level of prejudices, but no other variable has any significant effect on tolerance when these two variables are entered in the regression model.

Table 12
*Ordinary Least Squares Estimates of Ethnic Intolerance
against Ethnic Hungarians*

Gender: masculine (1)	.027	.006	.022	.023	-.017	-.024
Age (continuous)	-.087**	-.076*	-.082*	-.096**	-.050	-.052
Education (0-9)	.003	.007	.010	.025	.005	.019
Unemployed (1)	-.034	-.027	-.024	-.043	-.041	-.042
Personal income (continuous)	.017	.020	.019	.021	.039	.035
Residence: town (1)	.061*	.049*	.043	.047	-.025	-.032
Region: Transylvania (1)	-.081**	-.088**	-.092**	-.074*	-.030	-.049
Social trust		-.042				-.018
Authoritarianism			.097**			.047
Frustration				.158***		.087**
Prejudices					.468***	.389***
Adjusted R square	.016	.013	.019	.040	.223	.177

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; standardized coefficients *beta* shown only.

Intolerance toward Gypsies

Intolerance toward Gypsies in Romania is not only an ethnic problem, but a social phenomenon as well. Socially excluded and largely discriminated, they have also been involved in major ethnic conflicts, as those in Hădăreni, Bolintin, and Mihail Kogălniceanu¹. In spite of a public strategy to alleviate their hard social situation – that has not shown as of yet any positive effect – Gypsies still remain marginalized².

¹ Veronika Leila SZENTE, "Furie în zori. Violența împotriva rromilor în România", Centrul European pentru Drepturile Rromilor, seria rapoartelor pe țări, nr. 2, septembrie 1996. Also see Dimitrina PETROVA, "Stare de impunitate: încălcarea drepturilor omului – cazul rromilor din România", Centrul European pentru Drepturile Rromilor, seria rapoartelor pe țări, nr. 10, septembrie 2001.

² Marian CHIRIAC, "O necesară schimbare de strategie. Raport privind stadiul de aplicare a Strategiei guvernamentale de îmbunătățire a situației rromilor din România", in IDEM, *Provocările diversității. Politici publice privind minoritățile naționale și religioase din România*, Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Center, Cluj, 2005, pp. 33-58.

Table 13
Intolerance against Gypsies

Item	Agree (%)
Because they can not integrate, authorities should force Gypsies to live to the outer edge of society	36.2
Places like restaurants and stores should exist where access of Gypsies should be forbidden	32.3
The residents in villages and towns in Romania should have to choose whether Gypsies may settle in their district	47.2
The state should intervene in order to stop the growing in number of Gypsy communities	48.3
Authorities should stop Gypsies from travelling abroad, because they only make us be a scorn to other people	67.6
Item	Disagree (%)
The state should provide more assistance and subsidies to the Gypsies	53.6
It is good that special places exist for Gypsies in public schools and state universities	26.0

As we see in the table above, the expressed consent to some vexing and discriminating actions is a worry. Ethnic Romanians wish that authorities deprive Gypsies of a legitimate right – the free movement right – even though they have already experienced a similar limitation of the same right. Romanian citizens no longer need visas in order to travel across Europe, as stated by the Schengen agreement, but they clearly discriminate against Gypsies, which they consider culpable for the poor image of Romania abroad. Moreover they largely support social segregation and active discrimination measures, and reject affirmative action and the state support which favors Gypsies. Thus the appropriate regime for these respondents would not be a fully consolidated democracy, based on the principles of universal human rights and social equality, but rather an apartheid regime, founded on racial segregation and political and economical discrimination.

Table 14
Ordinary Least Squares Estimates of Intolerance against Gypsies

Gender: masculine (1)	-.017	-.026	-.027	-.021	-.037
Age (continuous)	.022	.023	.022	.009	.011
Education (0-9)	-.081*	-.084*	-.068*	-.053	-.054
Unemployed (1)	.053	.044	.063*	.042	.038
Personal income (continuous)	-.006	-.003	-.001	-.002	.006
Residence: town (1)	-.008	-.024	-.008	-.025	-.038
Region: Transylvania (1)	.050	.029	.061*	.059*	.044
Social trust		-.070*			-.047
Authoritarianism			.060*		.037
Frustration				.201***	.171***
Adjusted R square	.009	.014	.014	.048	.044

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; standardized coefficients *beta* shown only.

The regression models presented above indicate a weak significant effect of social trust on specific tolerance toward Gypsies. That is the same for education. The most important factor is again frustration. It means that frustration not only undermines social trust, but also feeds the public consent to some extreme measures of racial discrimination and segregation. The result is a warning which stems from the lack of importance of another factor, education. The level of education does not have the importance one would ordinarily expect it to have. When viewing the poor performance of public strategies to improve Gypsies' social condition, we only expect that discrimination and social exclusion will persist.

Intolerance and Prejudices against Jews

The public debate on the responsibilities that Romania has for the Holocaust is a novelty for Romanian society. Before this, the debate was confined to the individual responsibilities that some well-known intellectuals – Cioran, Eliade și Noica – had for the public discrimination of Jews in fascist Romania¹. While there is a public sensibility in discussing such topics, intolerance against Jews can still be perceived. This intolerance is rather symbolic – based on ethnic and religious prejudices, since Jews living in Romania in 2002 were only 5870 people, 0.027 % of the entire Romanian population.

Table 15
Intolerance against Jews

<i>Item</i>	<i>Agree (%)</i>
Jewish emigration should be encouraged	18.3
Jews' influence in our country is much too large	13.7
Authentic Christians should not interact with Jews	13.1

Negative stereotypes affect the way Romanians evaluate Jews. Whereas a number of stereotypes are anti-Judaic – regarding the collective fault of Jews for the Crucifixion of Jesus and the divine punishment God inflicted on them, there are also anti-Semitic prejudices – old and new – regarding the Jewish conspiracy to rule world politics and economy or their odd contribution in imposing communism in Romania.

¹ Alexandra LAIGNEL-LAVASTINE, *Filozofie și naționalism. Paradoxul Noica*, trad. roum. E. Marcu, Humanitas, București, 1998. See also Florin ȚURCANU, *Mircea Eliade – Prizonierul istoriei*, Humanitas, București, 2006.

Table 16
Prejudices against Jews

<i>Item</i>	<i>Agree (%)</i>
Jews destabilize societies where they live	10.8
Jews overemphasize the persecution they were exposed to in order to claim advantages	28.5
Jews' interests in Romania diverge from those of other Romanian citizens	24.1
World politics and finance are under Jewish control	23.5
Jews upheld communist rule in Romania	15.4
Jews can not be forgiven for such sin that the Crucifixion of Jesus	30.3
Jews' suffering is a divine punishment	37.3

Regression models above show that some demographic variables are predictors of intolerance against Jews in Romania. Whereas young people are slightly more intolerant, educated people living in towns are more tolerant toward Jews; even if the correlations are not so strong. Frustration and authoritarianism are more important predictors, but the greatest influence comes from prejudices against Jews. We have already noticed the importance of prejudices for the intolerance against Hungarians.

Table 17
Ordinary Least Squares Estimates of Intolerance against Jews

Gender: masculine (1)	-.026	-.019	-.043	-.028	-.067*	-.060*
Age (continuous)	-.028	-.037	-.040	-.033	-.091***	-.109***
Education (0-9)	-.062	-.067	-.039	-.052	-.089**	-.073*
Unemployed (1)	.005	-.003	.011	.002	-.025	-.034
Personal income (continuous)	.009	.003	.023	.011	.010	.009
Residence: town (1)	-.063*	-.061	-.059	-.070*	-.055*	-.046
Region: Transylvania (1)	-.048	-.029	-.051	-.044	.005	.011
Social trust		-.021				.008
Authoritarianism			.176***			.083**
Frustration				.075**		.047
Prejudices					.543***	.503***
Adjusted R square	.007	.006	.038	.012	.295	.279

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; standardized coefficients *beta* shown only.

Conclusion

We have already estimated various types of intolerance. We have shown that in Romania there still exists, at a public level, a social intolerance, an ethnic and

religious intolerance, as well as particular types of ethnic intolerance against ethnic Hungarians, Gypsies and Jews living in Romania. The question is whether these specific types of intolerance – social, religious, ethnic, and racial – do form a single dimension or they are different phenomena. Well-known studies already stressed not only that different types of intolerance are correlated, but also they have shown also that intolerance is related to authoritarian traits of personality¹. A principal components analysis (not shown here) demonstrates that in our case, authoritarianism and the various types of intolerance form a single, distinct factor. All the variables have loadings greater than 0.50, except the authoritarianism and the intolerance against ethnic Hungarians, which are still substantial (0.47). The greatest loading is that of the ethnic and religious intolerance (0.66).

The explanation for this noticeable intolerance appears to not only be authoritarianism, but also frustration. It is accountable in some extent for the general social, ethnic and religious intolerance, as well as for the specific intolerance against ethnic Hungarians and especially against Gypsies living in Romania. Frustration is expressed by people's discontent with the current inequity they perceive in every day life and by the dissatisfaction regarding their own life. Whereas frustration undermines social trust, it affects the tolerance toward people that are different in various respects.

The difficulty in counterpoising frustration is that factors initially estimated as highly important, that is education or residence in towns, appear as less favorable. Their overall effect is scant when compared not only with frustration, but also with authoritarianism or specific prejudices against other ethnicities. Consequently, we have to rely upon state institutions for this effort in fighting inequalities. The major problem is that citizens do not trust state institutions, as they have proved to be incapable in fighting corruption, for example. And many really estimate that one source of inequity is the way some people made a fortune by breaking the rules, in connivance with people in power. Whereas corruption may undermine economic growth, the belief in pervasive corruption erodes social and political trust. Therefore, political and social distrust undermine state legitimacy and social solidarity, fuel social and ethnic intolerance, in a continuous vicious cycle that is still very hard to break in Romania.

¹ Theodore W. ADORNO et al., *The Authoritarian Personality*, Harper, New York, 1950.